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ABSTRACT

This fact sheet contains information about first-time freshmen in California colleges and universities. While a larger number of recent California high school graduates enrolled in the state's public postsecondary institutions in fall 1997 than in the previous fall, this growth did not keep pace with the rising number of graduates. The number of high school graduates increased by 3.6%, and the number of first-time freshmen from California high schools increased by 2.0%. As a result, the public college-going rate of California students decreased from 54.2% to 53.3% in fall 1997. The number of first-time freshmen at the California State University increased by 40% over the last 5 years, with the increase in 1997 numbering 700 California students. Nevertheless, the participation rate for 1997 declined from 9.8% to 9.7%. A similar pattern was seen at the University of California. Changes patterns of college participation from different racial-ethnic groups contributed differentially to the statewide changes. Participation rates for Asian American and Filipino high school graduates increased, but participation rates for Black, Latino, and Native American public high school graduates fell below 50%. In fact, the fastest growing group of California high school graduates, Latino students, not only had the lowest postsecondary participation rates but these rates have been declining. (SLD)

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***First-Time Freshmen in California Colleges and Universities,
Fall 1998***



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*Factsheet 00-03**January 2000*

College-going Rates of High School Graduates

While a larger number of recent California high school graduates enrolled in the state's public postsecondary institutions in Fall 1997 than had the previous fall, this growth did not keep pace with the rise in the number of graduates. The number of high school graduates increased by 3.6 percent. Overall, the number of first-time freshmen from California high schools increased by 2.0 percent. As a result, the public college-going rate of California students decreased from 54.2 percent in Fall 1996 to 53.3 percent in Fall 1997.

The number of first-time freshmen from California high schools increased at each of the public postsecondary systems. At the California Community Colleges, the number of first-time freshmen increased by only 1.9 percent, resulting in a decline in the community college going rate from 36.6 percent to 36.0 percent. While the number of first-time freshmen at community colleges increased by almost five percent over the last six years, the participation rate of students fell 1.8 percentage points due to the increasing size of the high school graduating class.

The number of first-time freshmen at the California State University increased by 40 percent over the last five years, reflecting recovery from the steep enrollment cuts that occurred in the early 1990s. As result, the participation rate of high school graduates at the State University grew from 7.5 to 9.8 percent between 1993 and 1996. In Fall 1997, the number of first-time freshmen at the State University increased by 700 California students. Despite this increase, the participation rate declined from 9.8 to 9.7 percent.

Similarly, at the University of California, the number of California first-time freshmen grew by 18 percent over the last six years. The college-going rate of high school graduates attending the University expanded from 7.1 percent in Fall 1993 to 7.7 percent in Fall 1996. Despite nearly 500 more California first-time freshmen, this participation rate dipped to 7.6 percent in Fall 1997.

Are California public postsecondary systems failing to accommodate the "tidal wave" of new high school graduates? Unfortunately, no useful information is available about unmet demand at the community colleges and the applicant numbers and admission rates for the university systems illustrate conflicting trends. Growth in the number of applicants to the University was consistent with the rate of growth of first-time freshmen; at the State University, the applicant pool increased by 4.5 percent, while the enrolled freshmen grew by only 2.5 percent. Declines in the admission and enrollment rates of White applicants accounted for most of this difference. However, probably the most compelling reason for the decrease in the statewide college-going rate was the decline in the number of Latino high school graduates – the fastest growing portion of the high school graduate population – who sought admission to the State's public universities. This issue is examined more closely on the reverse side of this factsheet.

DISPLAY 1 College-Going Rates of Recent Graduates of All California High Schools, Fall 1993 to Fall 1998

Fall	California High School Graduates	First-Time freshmen							College Going Rate
		California Community Colleges		California State University		University of California			
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	%	
1993	272,800	101,072	37.0	20,594	7.5	19,281	7.1	51.5	
1994	277,384	93,223	33.6	23,433	8.4	20,312	7.3	49.4	
1995	280,352	98,651	35.2	25,638	9.1	21,196	7.6	51.9	
1996	286,069	98,940	34.6	28,088	9.8	22,168	7.7	52.2	
1997	296,281	99,476	33.6	28,750	9.7	22,587	7.6	50.9	
1998	311,732	97,250	31.2	30,089	9.7	23,496	7.5	48.4	

Regional differences

Contrary to the statewide trend, the participation rates of their recent high school graduates in several regions actually increased. The San Francisco Bay area expanded its lead by posting small increases in its community college and State University participation rates in Fall 1997. Orange County – with the second largest college-going rate – had a small increase in the participation rate of its graduates as a result of their expanded participation at community colleges. The Central Coast region – from Ventura to San Luis Obispo counties – posted a small increase in the college-going rate of its graduates, particularly at the state's public universities. The Central Valley also posted improvements in the college-going rates of its graduates. Growth in the proportion of their graduates enrolling at community colleges and the University of California more than compensated for a small decline in their participation rate at the California State University. The San Diego/Imperial region experienced a substantial increase in the participation of its graduates in all three public systems.

Declines in the participation rates in the remaining four regions were rooted in the decreases in the community college-going rates in all of these regions.

DISPLAY 2 Regional Participation of All California High School Graduates as First-Time Freshmen, Fall 1997

<u>Region</u>	<u>High School Graduates</u>	<u>California Community Colleges</u>		<u>California State University</u>		<u>University of California</u>		<u>Total College Going Rate</u>
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
San Francisco Bay	54,857	21,561	39.3	6,229	11.4	6,092	11.1	61.8
Orange County	24,651	10,019	40.6	2,297	9.3	2,421	9.8	59.8
Sacramento Area	16,069	6,468	40.3	1,459	9.1	1,083	6.7	56.1
Central Coast	18,514	7,555	40.8	1,374	7.4	1,362	7.4	55.6
San Diego/Imperial	25,116	9,125	36.3	2,574	10.2	2,043	8.1	54.7
Los Angeles County	79,919	27,723	34.7	8,767	11.0	6,548	8.2	53.9
State Average	296,281		36.0		9.7		7.6	53.3
North Central Valley	15,171	6,287	41.4	1,142	7.5	595	3.9	52.9
South Central Valley	20,790	7,705	37.1	1,983	9.5	723	3.5	50.1
Northern California	11,552	3,735	32.3	949	8.2	386	3.3	43.9
Riverside/San Bern.	29,642	6,566	22.2	2,138	7.2	1,456	4.9	34.3

Participation of public high school graduates

Changing patterns of college participation among student from different racial-ethnic groups contributed differentially to the statewide changes. While the community college-going rate declined for public high school graduates from all racial-ethnic groups, Asian public high school graduates improved their participation rates at both public university systems. The participation rates of Filipino graduates at the State University increased while their participation rate at the University declined. Conversely, the participation rate of White graduates at the State University decreased while their participation rate at the University was unchanged. The participation rates of Black, Latino, and Native American public high school graduates decreased in Fall 1997 from their levels in Fall 1996 at all three public postsecondary educational systems. The participation rate of Black public high school graduates fell below 50 percent. Only 42.5 percent of Latino public high school graduates continued their education beyond high school in a California public postsecondary institution in Fall 1997. As noted earlier, the fastest growing group of California high school graduates – Latino students – not only had the lowest postsecondary participation rates but these rates have been declining.

DISPLAY 3 College-Going Rates of Recent Public High School Graduates by Racial-Ethnic Group, Fall 1997 and Fall 1998

	California Community Colleges				California State University				University of California			
	1997		1998		1997		1998		1997		1998	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Asian*	9,433	31.0	9,587	28.9	3,955	13.0	4,146	12.5	6,585	21.6	6,656	20.1
Black	6,790	32.7	6,212	29.4	2,008	9.7	1,786	8.4	716	3.5	601	2.8
Filipino	3,405	37.7	3,395	35.5	1,481	16.4	1,552	16.2	827	9.2	875	9.1
Latino	27,650	33.7	26,687	30.4	6,058	7.4	6,144	7.0	2,486	3.0	2,384	2.7
Native Am.	1,052	44.5	943	37.5	235	9.9	205	8.2	140	5.9	137	5.5
White	39,446	31.7	38,020	29.6	8,532	6.9	9,313	7.3	7,222	5.8	6,600	5.1

*Estimated Asians and Pacific Islanders

Further information may be obtained from the Commission's Research Staff
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